A/AC.240/1995/CRP.5
20 March 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
UNITED NATIONS
23rd meeting
17 March 1995

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

1. It will be recalled that in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 48/215 B of 26 May 1994, the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its forty-ninth session on the replies received regarding attendance at the special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, in order to enable the Assembly at that session to recommend to the Assembly at its fiftieth session a precise timetable and agenda for the commemorative meeting and a suggested timetable for the conduct of the general debate of the fiftieth session. Pursuant to that request, the Secretariat prepared a note on the status of replies to the Secretary-General's invitation and organization of the special commemorative meeting (A/AC.240/1995/L.2), which was considered by the Preparatory Committee at its 21st meeting, on 2 February 1995.

2. At that meeting, the Preparatory Committee agreed that the Chairman would undertake further consultations with regard to the organization of the list of speakers for the special commemorative meeting. Pursuant to that request, a note was prepared by the Chairman on the organization of the list of speakers for the special commemorative meeting (A/AC.240/1995/L.3), and discussed at the 22nd meeting of the Committee, on 10 February 1995.

3. During the discussion of these various papers some important agreements have been reached with regard to the dates of the meeting and the length of speeches. The organization of the list of speakers remains to be agreed upon.

4. Before moving on to the organization of the list of speakers, I should like to recall the following agreements:

(a) Confirmation of the dates of the special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly: the dates are confirmed for 22 to 24 October;

(b) Length of speeches: At the 22nd meeting, in summing up the deliberations Ambassador Butler noted that, after much discussion, it had been agreed that the following would be recommended to heads of State and Government:

(i) Oral statements not to exceed five minutes;

(ii) The full written text of any statement prepared for the commemorative session may be circulated in the General Assembly Hall;

(iii) At the conclusion of the commemorative meeting, a book will be compiled, including the full text of all statements;

(c) Participation of observers: I should like to reiterate in this regard that observers will participate in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly, namely, they will be inscribed to speak after the list of Member States for that day has been exhausted. In addition, inscriptions for observers will be taken only after all Member States have been inscribed. To date requests have been received from 4 observers, out of a possible total of 23.

It will be recalled that in paragraph 8 of the report of the Preparatory Committee, 1/ it was agreed that the arrangements mentioned in resolution 48/215 B would apply also to Palestine in its capacity as observer. It was further agreed that the same would apply to other observers, if they so requested. This was confirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/12 of 9 November 1994.

5. The following conditions which have been previously discussed with reference to the organization of the meeting should also be recalled:

(a) In accordance with the practice followed in respect of the general debate, at each meeting priority will be given to heads of State followed by vice-presidents and crown princes/princesses, then heads of Government, and then ministers and heads of delegation;

(b) If a head of State or Government is late for his/her time slot, he/she will automatically fall to the last place at the list of heads of State or Government in that session. The same would apply for each other category;

(c) Furthermore, in the event that the level at which the statement will be made is altered subsequent to initial inscription, then the speaker will be transferred to the next available place in the appropriate category;

(d) The first speaker in the commemorative meeting would be the head of State of the host country of the Organization.

6. With regard to the organization of the list of speakers, a number of alternatives have been discussed, none of which meet everyone's complete satisfaction. However, it is imperative that we arrive at a conclusion on this

issue so as to recommend our decision to the General Assembly for appropriate action (as requested in para. 4 of resolution 48/215 B) and therefore allow for the proper planning of this most important meeting both in our capitals and within the Secretariat.

7. On the basis of the discussions held at previous meetings, I have met with members of the Secretariat and have asked them to simulate various scenarios for the Committee to consider. I should like to note in this regard that although it had been previously discussed that deliberations should begin on Sunday afternoon, we have come to the conclusion that the only way to accommodate all speakers is to begin formal deliberations on Sunday morning, thereby adding one additional session to what was previously contemplated. The Interfaith Service previously scheduled for Sunday morning will be rescheduled for Saturday afternoon. With this change, the options presented are based on the following premises:

(a) Time-slot availability, that is, the number of speakers per meeting and per day, calculated on the basis of the agreement on the length of speeches as mentioned above (five minutes per speaker plus one minute for transition from one speaker to another) and the six sessions available: two sessions per day on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday;

(b) Only on Monday should there be a night meeting. On Sunday a dinner by the President of the host country is scheduled. On Tuesday, the meeting should finish with the adoption of the declaration by 6 p.m., prior to the United Nations Day concert;

(c) Regardless of how the list is organized, Member States may exchange dates and positions among themselves.

8. The alternatives which I commend for your consideration are as follows:

(a) Drawing the first speaker from a box of dominoes and continuing alphabetically therefrom;

(b) Drawing lots for the numbers 1 to 6 which would designate the session at which the country would speak;

(c) The procedure discussed at the last meeting where Member States could line up to submit in writing their preferred choices for dates and position on a first come/first served basis.

9. These options are before you in document A/AC.240/1995/CRP.4.

Open meeting for discussion

10. I should like to note that, although the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee had originally been scheduled for 21 April, given the urgency of settling this matter, I will recommend to Ambassador Butler that another meeting be held during the week of 27 March. The time and the date will be communicated in the Journal as soon as they are available. I hope that by that time we all will have had time to reflect on the matter before us.

11. I should also like to inform you that the Drafting Group meeting which was scheduled for next Thursday will now meet on Friday, 24 March at 10 a.m., in the Economic and Social Council chamber.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 48 (A/49/48).